

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 256

August 4, 1999, 4:24 p.m.
Page S-10179 Temp. Record

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS/5th Agriculture Aid Proposal (Conrad)

SUBJECT: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000 . . . S. 1233. Cochran motion to table the Conrad/Grassley amendment No. 1517 to the Lott (for Daschle) amendment No. 1499, as amended.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 51-48

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1233, the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000, will provide \$60.710 billion in new budget authority (of which \$13.98 billion will be discretionary budget authority, which is the amount provided in fiscal year 1999) for fiscal year 2000. Loan authorizations will total \$9.650 billion.

The Lott (for Daschle) amendment, as amended by voice vote by the Cochran modified amendment, would provide \$7.6 billion in emergency agricultural assistance. The amendment would enact the provisions of an earlier Cochran amendment which was withdrawn after a motion to table failed (see vote No. 249), with the addition of \$400 million to assist agricultural producers in purchasing additional insurance coverage for the 2000 crop year.

The Conrad/Grassley amendment would provide approximately \$8.8 billion in agricultural assistance, as estimated by its sponsors. \$5.544 billion of the funding would be given through Agriculture Market Transition Act (AMTA) payments (though \$200 million of that amount would be used to provide assistance to dairy producers). Other provisions include that \$500 million would be provided in payments to soybean and oilseed producers, the cotton step-2 export program would be reinstated (at a cost of \$201 million), \$300 million would be provided for strengthening markets, income, and supply (\$100 million of which would be reserved for livestock producers), \$492 million would be provided in crop loss assistance, \$400 million would be provided in crop insurance, \$70 million would be provided for 1998 crop losses, \$300 million would be provided for assistance to producers of specialty crops, \$500 million would be provided in disaster assistance, \$250 million would be provided for a flooded land reserve program, \$250 million would be provided for emergency livestock assistance, and \$100 million would be provided for rural economic assistance.

(See other side)

YEAS (51)			NAYS (48)			NOT VOTING (1)	
Republicans (48 or 89%)	Democrats (3 or 7%)		Republicans (6 or 11%)	Democrats (42 or 93%)		Republicans (1)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Jeffords	Feingold	Ashcroft	Akaka	Kennedy	Crapo- ²	
Allard	Kyl	Graham	Burns	Baucus	Kerrey		
Bennett	Lott	Torricelli	Campbell	Bayh	Kerry	EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE: 1—Official Business 2—Necessarily Absent 3—Illness 4—Other SYMBOLS: AY—Announced Yea AN—Announced Nay PY—Paired Yea PN—Paired Nay	
Bond	Lugar		Grams	Biden	Kohl		
Brownback	Mack		Grassley	Bingaman	Landrieu		
Bunning	McCain		Hatch	Boxer	Lautenberg		
Chafee	McConnell			Breaux	Leahy		
Cochran	Murkowski			Bryan	Levin		
Collins	Nickles			Byrd	Lieberman		
Coverdell	Roberts			Cleland	Lincoln		
Craig	Roth			Conrad	Mikulski		
DeWine	Santorum			Daschle	Moynihan		
Domenici	Sessions			Dodd	Murray		
Enzi	Shelby			Dorgan	Reed		
Fitzgerald	Smith, Bob (I)			Durbin	Reid		
Frist	Smith, Gordon			Edwards	Robb		
Gorton	Snowe			Feinstein	Rockefeller		
Gramm	Specter			Harkin	Sarbanes		
Gregg	Stevens			Hollings	Schumer		
Hagel	Thomas			Inouye	Wellstone		
Helms	Thompson			Johnson	Wyden		
Hutchinson	Thurmond						
Hutchison	Voinovich						
Inhofe	Warner						

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. After debate, Senator Cochran moved to table the Conrad/Grassley amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

A majority of Senators voted against tabling an earlier Cochran amendment (which was then withdrawn). Many of the Senators who voted for that amendment felt that the amount being given in that amendment could prove to be too high. The President has yet to request any emergency funding, despite a request from Congress for him to assess the current situation and to submit a proposal if warranted, and in many areas for many crops it is still too early to tell how good or bad the harvest will be. Ordinarily, we wait for crops to fail before we give aid; in this case, for many crops, we are being asked to give money on the assumption that they will fail. We urge our colleagues to show some restraint. Earlier this year the proposal was to give \$4 billion. When we started this debate, many Senators were determined to keep the total figure under \$7 billion. A short time ago, the Cochran amendment was reoffered, modified to increase spending, and was passed by voice vote at a level of \$7.649 billion. We are still at the beginning of the 106th Congress. If it turns out that more money is needed, we will be able to pass another bill. At this point, though, we should not be in such a rush to spend the surplus. Once that money is gone, it will not be available for other purposes, such as to pay for Social Security or Medicare reform. We are not willing to comment on the specific suggestions for new spending that have proposed in this particular amendment. If a consensus develops later this year that additional funding is needed, we will revisit the issue, but we are not willing to go any farther than we already have. We urge the rejection of this amendment, and we then urge Senators to vote in favor of the Daschle amendment, which has been amended to contain the provisions of the Cochran modified amendment.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

This amendment represents a true compromise between the parties. On the issue of total funding, it is about halfway between the original Cochran and Daschle proposals. On the issue of whether most of the funds would be distributed through AMTA payments or loan deficiency (LDP) payments, the Cochran proposal for AMTA payments is adopted. Republicans feel very strongly that AMTA payments should be used because they would get funding to farmers within 10 days, whereas LDP payments are made through a convoluted process that can take 6 months or more before any aid reaches farmers. On the other side, the increased costs of the amendment come from the inclusion of proposals from the Daschle amendment, such as disaster aid, a flood program, more assistance for livestock producers, and an earmark for dairy assistance. The sponsors of this amendment, in good faith, tried to make this amendment evenly balanced between the proposals favored by the two parties. We believe they succeeded. This amendment should be adopted.